

The nest, if made, has not been found. There are two pairs here this year in the haunts where for the two years before only one pair had been.

May 31, 1913. No nest; no Cardinals.

THE EXTERMINATION OF THE WILD TURKEY IN CLAYTON COUNTY, IOWA.

BY ALTHEA R. SHERMAN.

Some brief reference to the history of Iowa may afford a better understanding of the early status, and speedy extinction of the Wild Turkey in Clayton County, following the occupancy of its land by the white race. After the treaty of 1804, made by the United States Government with the Sacs and Fox Indians, the whole of Iowa (excepting a few square miles in the northeast corner, which were claimed by the Sioux) was set apart as the tribal property of the Sacs and Foxes. It was held by them as their private hunting grounds and was jealously guarded by these warlike Indians from encroachment by other tribes. At the same time it was one of the duties of United States soldiers stationed in the frontier forts to protect these Indians in their rights by expelling any of the whites who ventured across the Mississippi River. Among the participants in this work of expulsion were two soldiers, who afterward became prominent characters in United States history, Colonel Zachary Taylor and one of his lieutenants, Jefferson Davis. There can be no doubt that their task of keeping white men out of this territory was well done; also that the Indians acting upon the principles of true conservation, maintained a great abundance of game.

In 1832, after their defeat in the Blackhawk War, the Sac and Fox Indians were forced to relinquish the eastern portion of their hunting grounds, which was thrown open for white occupancy the following year. The stream of immigration that slowly trickled into Clayton County was a feeble one, very unlike the tidal wave that swept over Oklahoma fifty-five years later. The early settlers in this part of Iowa

had no lack of domestic animals for food, hence the destruction of the Wild Turkey did not have its origin in the needs of mankind. The great abundance of this species in its neighborhood gave the name Turkey River to a stream that takes a southeasterly course almost diagonally across the county. This refers to its present boundaries, not to its early ones in the days of magnificent distances, when Clayton County stretched for unnumbered miles to the westward, and was bounded on the north by the Dominion of Canada—then called British America. In pioneer days all the land in the southeastern part of the county, upward of two hundred square miles, was covered with a heavy forest of hardwood trees, except the bottom lands at the mouth of the Turkey River, where it is said "horse-weed" grew in rank profusion, yielding a black, oily seed that was a favorite food of the Wild Turkeys.

Very few of the people are now living who came to this region in the late thirties; but ten years ago there were others, some of whom were contributors to "The Old Settlers Edition" of the North Iowa Times, published February 19, 1903. From its columns are taken the following excerpts from the story told by Mrs. Ann Dickens, who moved to Clayton County in April, 1836: "A view of Turkey River and its surrounding bluff at this time would hardly bring to mind what it was in the days of 1836. When I arrived there, the hills were covered with immense timber and no undergrowth, owing to the Indians' custom of burning the ground every fall to help the growth of feed for deer. The woods were full of panthers, bears, wild cats, wolves, foxes, deer and wild turkey; and I have often wondered how those wild turkeys lived and multiplied to such a great extent, where the woods were full of wild animals, for whom the eggs and the turkey's young would be such a toothsome meal.

"The Indians' name for the Turkey River was Sesick, Anashungara.

"At stated times during the year a regular trail was formed by the wild turkeys crossing the river, which, from this fact,

took its name. I have seen a train of them, two to four abreast, extending from the river's bank to the forest a quarter of a mile away.

"A great many of these turkeys were trapped, the trap a crude affair, but effective, to the extent that one night my husband secured twenty-four of them. The trap was simply an area about ten feet square, enclosed and covered. A trench extended from the outside, and gradually descending, ran under the wall, opening on the inside. Through this trench the turkeys walked, led on by the corn that had been generously sprinkled there."

Levy Springer, also a pioneer of 1836, contributed the following: "Deer and wild turkey were plenty, and I have seen as many as ten or a dozen of the latter at one time playing on a high point not over 150 yards from our house. They used to frequent that point in the spring of the year, but they were generally poor and we did not bother them."

Hon. Robert Quigley, at present senator from this district to the Iowa legislature, relates, that when a small boy he was present at the killing of the last Wild Turkeys on Buck Creek. They were two gobblers, weighing twenty and twenty-two pounds respectively, and were shot by his uncle, David Griffith, about the year 1853 or 1854; also that after that date a few other birds of this species were taken at different points near the Turkey River. From this it appears that a game bird, preserved in great numbers by the conservation of the Indians, did not survive the coming of the white man longer than twenty years. It is noteworthy that this is exactly half the period it took to bring the species to the verge of extinction in New England, according to the writings of John Joselyn, as recently quoted by Mr. E. H. Forbush in his "Game Birds, Wild Fowl and Shore Birds."

Concerning the species Dr. P. R. Hoy is quoted in "The Birds of Wisconsin" as saying that the winter of 1842 was practically fatal to them, "snow was yet two feet deep in March, with a stout crust, so that the turkeys could not get to the ground. They became so poor and weak that they

could not fly, and thus became an easy prey to the wolves, foxes, wild cats, minks, etc., which exterminated almost the entire race." Like weather conditions may have prevailed in Iowa, and a similar disaster may have overtaken the Wild Turkey; if so, its story has not survived their disappearance.

NOTES ON THE SAGE HEN.

BY S. S. VISHER.

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The Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) is in many respects one of the most interesting of the birds of many portions of the west. The cock is almost as large as a hen turkey, so he is big enough to attract anyone's attention. All grouse are wonderfully effectively colored from the standpoint of protection. Some, of which the sage hen is one, have so much confidence in their invisibility that they have been dubbed "Fool Hens," because they allow such close approach. It is astonishing how completely hidden a sage chick can be, even on bare ground. Many a time I have come upon a mother walking conspicuously along with her brood. When she flew they would squat low on the short grass and disappear from sight. It is a mighty good test of acuteness of observation to then try to find all the young. Perhaps some may be located quite easily, but others, "in plain sight," will not be seen until they fly almost from under one's feet.

As the name implies, sage hens are found in areas where the sage brush (chiefly *Artemisia tridentata*) is abundant. Formerly they were found in many sections of western South Dakota and westward. The last ones recorded from this state, except in the northwestern corner, were found in Sage Creek in the Badlands in 1907. By 1910 all were gone except those in Harding and Butte Counties. Now (1913), after three more years of homesteading, Sage Grouse are restricted in this state to the Little Missouri Valley in Harding County and to the headwaters of Indian Creek in Butte.